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WARSAW PACT ON FULL ALERT OVER U.S. TROOP BUILD UP IN WEST GERMANY

October 16, 1986 The U.S. troop build up in West Germany in recent weeks was an unprecedented provocation and Moscow has put the Warsaw Pact forces on full alert to take any action deemed necessary, the Soviet Union's Foreign Minister said today.

Speaking on national television, he said the concentration of U.S. forces in West Germany posed a grave threat to Eastern Europe, but the Warsaw Pact was prepared to meet the challenge.

Western diplomats described the confrontation as the most serious since the Iron Curtain was drawn in Europe.

Washington had earlier warned Moscow that any interference with its vital supply routes to the Middle East would force massive retaliation.

The U.S. has been using military installations in European NATO countries, mainly West Germany, as a bridgehead for its forces fighting the Syrians in the Middle East. Thousands of troops and huge arms supplies have swelled West German U.S. bases.

The Syrian offensive in Jordan and Lebanon, started in August, has ground to a halt since American forces intervened on a massive scale in September.

Moscow has protested strongly against the intervention, but has so far supported Syria only with arms.

But ever since the three-pronged arms reduction negotiations in Geneva broke down on May 28, tensions have mounted in Europe.

Relations within NATO came under considerable strain because the European partners felt the U.S. had been too uncompromising on the issue of the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), also known as the 'Star Wars' program.

The Soviet Union walked out of the Geneva talks started on March 12 when the Americans refused to link negotiations on intercontinental weapons and intermediate range nuclear forces with the space bases defense system.

But the deployment of 464 American Cruise Missiles and 108 Pershing-2 medium range missiles in Europe was nevertheless stepped up, albeit against strong internal opposition.

Belgium and the Netherlands agreed to deploy their contingent of Cruise missiles, a decision previously postponed pending the outcome of the Geneva talks.

Britain and Italy were ahead of their respective deployment schedules by the end of August, but internal strife over the issue cost both governments vital popular support.

Deployment of the 108 Pershing-2 medium range missiles in West Germany and of Cruise was also stepped up, but also led to a strong political polarization within the country and to violent mass protests directed against U.S. bases.

The Bonn government has also been under attack from Eastern Europe for its alleged revanchist intentions.

The West German Chancellor failed to calm long-held suspicions in Eastern Europe that Bonn was seeking the reunification of the two Germany's within its 1937 borders at all costs, when he addressed a meeting of a Silesian exile organization on June 14.

He said he hoped all Germans could one day live in freedom in a united country.

With Superpower relations at an all time low and the financially crippling arms race in full swing, the Eastern Bloc reacted with great sensitivity to the Chancellor's remarks.

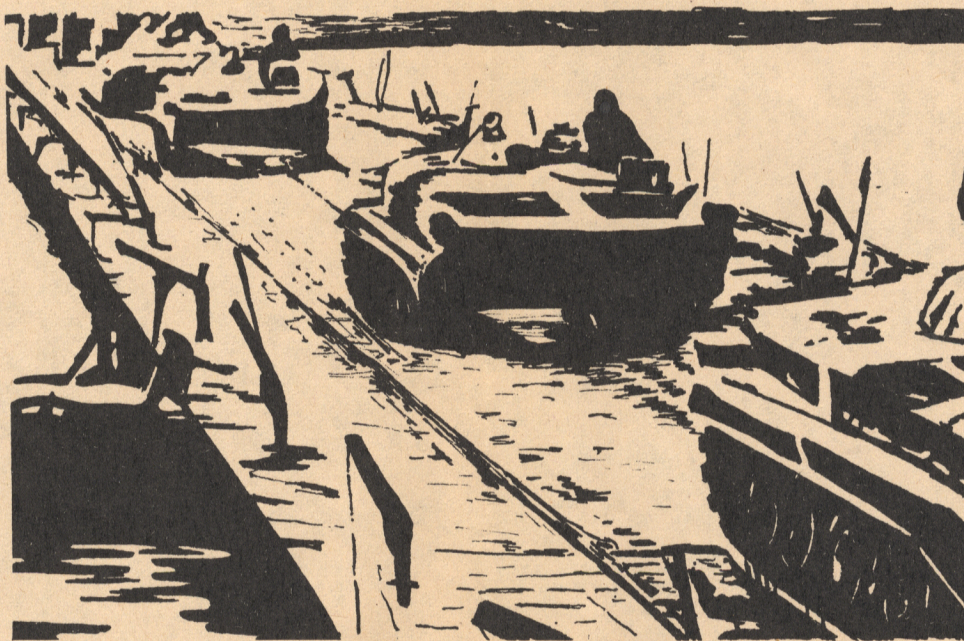
Moscow accused Washington of aiding and abetting Bonn's "sinister" intentions and Western intelligence reported a massive build up of troops in Warsaw Pact front states. The number of Soviet SS-20 medium range missiles on East German soil was doubled in the space of only three months.

The lack of real leadership in the Kremlin due to the illness of the Head of State since late last year, is seen by Western diplomats as a major cause for concern at this time of high tension.

Political analysts agree that the flaring up of the Middle East conflict was a welcome excuse for the U.S. President to boost the number of American troops in Europe to counter the Warsaw Pact's threat.

They said social tensions in both East and West as a result of the threat of war was also putting governments under pressure to seek fast success in resolving the crisis.

"Reactions of the Superpowers and their allies to the present crisis in the European theatre have never been more difficult to predict than today", a British political analyst said gloomily.



Soviet Motorized Infantry Approaching Border - October 5th.

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